COMMON FALLACIES

FALLACIES OF APPEAL

* most common
* imbedded in language of claims or warrants
* include:

  AD HOMINEM - Attacks on the speaker rather than his ideas

  APPEAL TO TRADITION - “We’ve always done it this way!”

  APPEAL TO PITY & FEAR - Irrational attempts to shame or scare people into compliance
Fallacies of Appeal (cont.)

* Appeal to Ignorance - NOT just any dumb argument, it shifts the burden of proof.
  “Prove that there are no ghosts!”
  Absurd, since one can’t prove a negative

* Bandwagon Arguments
  “But, mom, everybody’s doing it!”
Fallacies of Appeal

• Ad hominem
• Appeal to tradition
• Appeal to pity and fear
• Argument from Ignorance
• Bandwagon arguments
Fallacies of Language

Exploit extreme language to manipulate audiences:

* **Emotive Language** - Abuse of colorful adjectives to replace evidence, *red button words*: “The hideous and immoral practices of the cowardly pinko-liberals are destroying the moral fabric of the country!”

* **Jargones** - Using specialized language to baffle the listener

* **Equivocation** - Exploiting vagueness in language to confuse or shift ground
Fallacies of Evasion

*Simple Evasion - Being non-responsive, refusing to answer

*Shifting Ground - Changing or retreating from your position when you can’t defend it

*Red Herring or Straw Man - An irrelevant but easily argued issue is used to distract us from the issue at hand.

Candidate: “That’s not the question. The real question is . . . “
Logical Fallacies

Often unique to the patterns of reason:

**Reasoning by Sign**
(x parallels or indicates y) 

**False Analogy**
(superstition)

“Where there’s smoke, there’s fire.”

“Goody Proctor walked by my house, and ten minutes later I miscarried. She’s a witch!”
## Logical Fallacies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parallel Reason</th>
<th>False Analogy</th>
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<tr>
<td>( A = B )</td>
<td>comparing unlike things</td>
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“Iraq is like Vietnam”

“One’s a jungle one’s a desert.
How so?”
Logical Fallacies

**Generalization** or Reasoning from Example

By lots of examples or statistical research, we believe this to be true.

**Hasty Generalization**

“No, that’s not true, because I knew a guy once who...“ Insufficient examples
Logical Fallacies

Reason by Definition - the deductive process of applying generalizations to particular beings, objects, or processes

“It has fur and is nursing. It’s a mammal.”

Sweeping Generalization - Suggesting that something often true is always true

“You’re a black man, so you must be a good dancer.”
Logical Fallacies

Causation (A leads to B) has several fallacies

* False Cause - It came before this, thus, it caused this

* Oversimplification - Ignoring multiple causes of a phenomenon

* Slippery Slope - Suggesting an elaborate chain of events without proof
**Logical Fallacies**

* **Reasoning from Dilemma** - Choosing between the “horns of the bull” or two equally desirable courses of action. There can only be two mutually exclusive choices.

* **Forcing the Dichotomy** - Ignoring additional choices to force others into undesirable conditions.
Logical Fallacies

Reasoning from Authority - When the speaker or a quoted source asserts conclusions based upon their own expertise

Fallacy of Appeal to Authority - Really should be “appeal to fame,” since it uses merely famous people as experts.
Logical Fallacies in Sum

False Sign
False Analogy
Hasty Generalization
Sweeping Generalization
Causation fallacies: False Cause, Slippery Slope, and Oversimplification
Forced Dichotomy
Appeal to Authority/Fame
<table>
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<th>Pattern of Reason</th>
<th>Fallacy</th>
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<td>A) False Sign</td>
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<td>2) Sign</td>
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<td>3) Definition</td>
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<td>5) Authority</td>
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<td>6) Cause</td>
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<td>7) Parallel Case</td>
<td>G) Appeal to Fame</td>
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